

Michal Beth Dinkler

Silent Statements

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Narrative Representations of Speech
and Silence in the Gospel of Luke

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To John, Alethea, and Daelen

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Introduction

*As a result of him,
the thoughts of many hearts
will be revealed.*

– Luke 2.35

Scholars have long agreed: Luke loves words. Many have hailed Luke's language as the best Greek in the New Testament; throughout Luke-Acts, the unstoppable divine word emerges as an undeniable motif.¹ Even a brief comparison with its canonical counterparts demonstrates that, thematically, the Gospel of Luke is preoccupied with the power of spoken words.² Words, Luke tells us, can entrap (20.26) or they can save (12.11–12). And yet, words can also deceive and mislead (21.8). Out of the heart's abundance, the mouth speaks (6.45).³ Tennyson was right: "Words, like nature, half reveal and half conceal the soul within."⁴

And yet, words alone do not a language make. One arranges words in sequences, ties them together with grammatical signals and rhetorical devices, and ultimately builds them into sentences and paragraphs and discourses. This much is commonly understood. What is not so well understood is the function that silence plays in the overall construction. Just as music without silence

¹ The bibliography is vast. Examples include H.J. Cadbury, "Four Features of Lukan Style," in *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. L.E. Keck and J.L. Martyn, Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), 87–102; idem, *The Style and Literary Method of Luke*, HTS 6 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1920); N. Turner, "The Quality of the Greek of Luke-Acts," in *Studies in New Testament Language and Text*, ed. J.K. Elliot, NovTSup 44 (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 387–400; Loveday Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1–4 and Acts 1.1*, SNTSMS 78 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Juhwan Joseph Kim, "What is this Word?": *An Early Christian Narrative of the Universal Spread of the Spirit-Accompanied Word* (Ph.D. Diss.: Harvard University, 2009); Adelbert Denaux, Rita Corstjens, and Hellen Mardega, eds., *The Vocabulary of Luke: An Alphabetical Presentation and a Survey of Characteristic and Noteworthy Words and Word Groups in Luke's Gospel* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009).

² Whereas in Matthew 13.54 and Mark 6.2, the people marvel at Jesus' "wisdom" and "mighty works," in the Lukan parallel, they "testify" to him and wonder "at the words of grace which poured forth from his mouth" (4.21–22). The Lukan Jesus is a proven prophet because of "his powerful deeds *and words*" (24.19). Among the Synoptics, only in Luke does the risen Jesus remind his disciples about his words (24.44), and only in Luke do the women at the empty tomb "remember his words" (24.8). Cf. John 2.22.

³ The parallel in *Gospel of Thomas* 45 does not explicitly mention *speaking*: "Out of the abundance of the heart he brings forth evil things."

⁴ See Lord Alfred Tennyson's moving elegy for his lost friend, Arthur Henry Hallam, *In Memoriam A.H.H.*, in *The Works of Tennyson*, ed. Lord Hallam Tennyson (London and New York: Macmillan, 1907), 1:242.

collapses into cacophony, so words without silence signify nothing. The silences are the invisible, inaudible cement that can hold the entire edifice together.

Few scholars have examined the multiple ways that the Lukan portrayals of words *and* silences function together toward particular rhetorical ends. There is, of course, a paradox here. Luke loves words, and yet I want to highlight his silences. Why? I desire to draw these two concepts together in critical analysis because I am convinced that speech and silence are inseparable; they mutually constitute and complement one other, in text as in life. Focusing on both speech and silence in the Lukan narrative enriches and deepens one's experience of the whole.⁵ As Foucault asserts, critics must "try to determine the different ways of not saying [because] there is not one but many silences, and they are *an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses*."⁶ In the present work, I propose various ways of mapping the "not one but many silences" that "underlie and permeate" Luke's Gospel.

Let me illustrate: consider the MGM movie version of *The Wizard of Oz* (1939). The scenes where Dorothy Gale is going about her everyday, mundane life in Kansas appear in black-and-white, but as soon as she enters Munchkinland, Technicolor floods the scene. The magical world of Oz is depicted entirely in color, and the film only returns to black-and-white when Dorothy has returned to her drab, colorless life on the farm. Adding the dazzling color cinematography when Dorothy entered Oz created a level of nuance and detail to the picture that was quite striking for viewers – especially when the movie was released. This play between black-and-white and color was intentional, meant to contrast the dusty Kansas landscape with the wonder and magic of the Land of Oz;⁷ the movie would not have been the same if it had been filmed entirely in black-and-white, or entirely in color. In the following pages, I hope to show that attention to the distinctive terrain of Luke's speech and silences – Luke's narrative soundscape – similarly adds a layer of nuance and detail to Luke's narrative that expands and enriches our understanding of its messages. Reading Luke's Gospel without attending to Luke's silences is like deciding ahead of time to

5 Lisa Mazzei reflects: "A search for the whole of speech is not possible without a commensurate search for the silence therein." *Inhabited Silence in Qualitative Research: Putting Post-structural Theory to Work* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 32.

6 David Couzens Hoy, ed., *Foucault: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 931. Emphasis mine.

7 Writer Herman Mankiewicz wrote before even beginning the script, "As discussed, this part of the picture...will be shot in black and white, but every effort should be made, through tinting, to emphasize the grey nature of the landscape and Dorothy's daily life." Qtd. in Aljean Harmetz, *The Making of the Wizard of Oz: Movie Magic and Studio Power in the Prime of MGM – and the Miracle of Production* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 27.

watch *The Wizard of Oz* only in black-and-white, as though this were the filmmakers' only option when they created it.

I believe that the Lukan narrator⁸ seeks to shape the reader/hearer⁹ into an ideal witness to his message – an ideal witness who listens to, receives, and per-

8 In this study, I use the name “Luke” to designate the Gospel traditionally known by that name. I also use “Luke” to refer to the implied author of the Gospel, noting that debates over the flesh-and-blood historical author continue, but do not impact my discussion. “Lukan narrator” refers to the narrator – the storyteller – constructed by the implied author to tell the story from a particular perspective. For more on the literary concepts of implied author and narrator, see Wayne Booth’s classic formulation in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 70–76 and 428–31 and the more recent Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller, *The Implied Author: Concept and Controversy* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006). The distinction between the “real” (historical) author and the narrator has become commonplace, but Seymour Chatman (expanding upon Booth) popularized a third “authorial” category – the *implied author* – which is “an image of the author in the text” that differs from the actual historical author. In chapter 5 of *Coming to Terms*, “In Defense of the Implied Author,” Chatman insists that the term “implied author” is necessary, especially when the “real” (historical) author is unknown, as is the case with Luke’s Gospel. Seymour Chatman, *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), 76. However, other narratologists (notably, Gérard Genette) reject the notion of the implied author as superfluous except in cases wherein the real author differs notably from the vision of the author that the text creates (such as in the case of unreliable narration). I agree with those who argue that the implied author should not be considered a ubiquitous narrative principle. As Chatman himself says, “The question is whether the real author and the narrator between them account for all the distinctions we sense in actual texts.” *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Discourse and Film* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978), 81. Though Chatman would answer this question in the negative, my view is that a third-person omniscient narrator is closer to the “implied author” than first-person, unreliable narrators would be, and therefore, narrative analysis of Luke’s Gospel functions perfectly well without positing an additional third category of authorial agency. Thus, I refer to the storyteller as the *narrator*, who is distinct from the historical author (and/or the Lukan redactor).

9 It is common to note that Luke’s “implied readers” (the intended recipients of the narrative) likely were not readers at all, but *hearers*, which raises two major issues. First, reading and hearing are two different psychological activities, and second, print-dominated cultures often view texts as static objects, whereas oral cultures tend to conceive of speech as an event. This is Stephen Moore’s critique of “literary” approaches to the Gospels: “To call the evangelist’s intended listening audience ‘the reader’ and then produce minute analyses of a reading that in all probability never occurred . . . would seem the ultimate waste of time.” *Literary Criticism and the Gospels* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 87. Still, despite their differences, oral and written narratives also share common traits. For instance, both inherently unfold sequentially. In fact, Moore admits that, “The left-to-right reception of the verbal string, which figures so prominently in Iser’s phenomenology of reading . . . has clear affinities with the syllable-by-syllable experience of hearing a text read” (88). Both readers and hearers share common strategies for meaning-making: they assume that events in a story are somehow causally con-

ceives the divine word correctly. In this, I am presupposing and building upon the work of John Darr, who has argued convincingly that, “the Lukan text is designed to persuade its readers to become believing witnesses,”¹⁰ specifically, to become “certain kinds of *hearers* (attentive, receptive, discerning, committed, tenacious) and *retellers* (accurate, bold, effective, persistent)” of the gospel message.¹¹ I want to add to this two further observations: first, Luke’s ideal witnesses will use speech and silence strategically when communicating the divine word with others, and second, speech and silence are themselves crucial strategies by which the Lukan narrator attempts to persuade readers to become believing witnesses. One way to read the Lukan text is as an early Christian proclamation – not *only* of the gospel message, as so very many readers have rightly understood – but also of the proper ways to use speech and silence in light of that message. Three further contentions inform this hypothesis:

- 1) One, although many people consider speech and silence to be mutually exclusive – silence as the absence of speech – this common perceptual frame limits, rather than opens up, interpretive possibilities when reading ancient narratives.¹²
- 2) Two, that right uses of speech and silence are key aspects of religious identity;
- 3) Three, that attention to speech and silence at times complicates and at other times corroborates traditional scholarly assessments of the Lukan narrative.

nected and that the writer has written for a specific discernible reason, and they draw upon extratextual knowledge and conventions to make sense of what they read or hear. Thus, it is not sufficient simply to point out that aural and visual receptions of a text are different; one must determine how the specific differences are relevant to the analysis in question. I refer to the Lukan “reader” throughout this work, but my observations apply to “hearers,” as well. It is worth noting that some narrative critics, such as Whitney Shiner [*Proclaiming the Gospel: First-Century Performance of Mark* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 2003)] do attempt to recreate the auditory experiences of an original audience, and thus self-consciously avoid the “minute analyses” of close readings to which Moore refers.

10 John Darr, *On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 53.

11 Emphasis original. John Darr, “‘Watch How You Listen’ (Lk. 8:18): Jesus and the Rhetoric of Perception in Luke-Acts,” in *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament*, ed. E.S. Malbon and E.V. McKnight, JSNTSup 109 (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994), 87.

12 A related view is that silence is the absence of any noise at all. One notorious example is the so-called “silent piece” of John Cage, composer, entitled 4’33, which consists of four minutes and thirty-three seconds of the performer making no noise whatsoever. It was first performed on August 29, 1952. For his own reflections on the piece, see John Cage I–VI, *The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990).

I aim to explore and describe what remains largely uncharted territory – the complex ways that narrative intersections of speech and silences can be useful touch-points for understanding how the Lukan narrative attempts to shape its readers.

The first step when embarking on an expedition through uncharted territory is, of course, to survey the landscape: to get the lay of the land. That is the goal of this chapter. However, because Lukan scholars already have emphasized the topic of speech in Luke's Gospel, I will call particular attention to recent developments in scholarship on silence.¹³ The chapter is divided into four major sections. Part I introduces previous scholarship on silence, both generally and in antiquity. Part II makes the case for using a narrative-critical methodology to explore the silences in Luke's Gospel, and defines key narratological concepts. Part III introduces the silences in the Gospel of Luke, and Part IV outlines the book.

Part I: The Multivalent Phenomenon of Silence

Several trends in recent scholarship point toward a rising tide of interest in silence across diverse disciplines, and gesture toward existing lacunae in Lukan studies; as such, they serve as warrants for the work undertaken here.

13 Many scholars focus on Jesus' spoken teachings, often mining them for evidence of theological redactions and tradition transmission, but the studies are too numerous to list here. Bultmann famously classified Jesus' sayings taxonomically (prophecy, apophthegms, logia, etc.). *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963); *Jesus and the Word* (New York: Scribner's, 1958). See also Eugene Boring, *Sayings of the Risen Jesus: Christian Prophecy in the Synoptic Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982). Jesus' utterances – and his silence in the passion narrative – often appear in discussions of doctrine, such as debates over New Testament Christologies. For example, J.C. O'Neill hypothesized that Jesus' silence in the passion narrative indicates his Messiahship. "The Silence of Jesus," *NTS* 15 (1968–69): 153–167. See also Bas van Iersel, "Der Sohn" in den synoptischen Jesusworte. *Christusbezeichnung der Gemeinde oder Selbst-bezeichnung Jesu?* NovTSup (Leiden: Brill, 1961); Ferdinand Hahn, *Christologische Hoheitstitel. Ihre Geschichte im frühen Christentum*, FRLANT 83 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963); Anthony Thiselton, "Christology in Luke, Speech-Act Theory, and the Problem of Dualism in Christology after Kant," in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ. Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Theology*, ed. Joel Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

Previous Scholarship on Silence in General

Understandably, the concept of silence often escapes notice altogether. Silence is slippery; trying to describe it is like trying to grab hold of running water. Still, many different critical approaches offer conceptual tools to aid in this task; silence has been profitably analyzed in terms of its *context of expression* (silence in a library differs from silence in a torture chamber),¹⁴ its *source* (personal choice or external pressure, for example),¹⁵ and its interpersonal *functions* (silence can alienate, or silence can unify).¹⁶ On a most basic level, we can distinguish between silences that are external or internal to the communication process. Some silences – such as students reading silently in a classroom – are not expected to communicate anything; they are external to the communication process. Other silences – such as conversational pauses or “eloquent silences”¹⁷ – are part of the communication process and thus, internal to it.

The latter type, those silences internal to the communication process, provoke varying responses from observers. Cinema again provides a helpful illustration. Consider the difference between silent films and the “talking pictures” that

14 Richard Johanneson distinguishes between silence that occurs in human thought, in interpersonal communication, in political/civil life, or in pathological settings. See “The Functions of Silence: A Plea for Communication Research,” *Western Speech* 38 (1974): 25–35.

15 Most of the literature outlining the multivalent functions of silence distinguishes between unintentional and intentional silences. Unintentional silences refer to those instances in which a person is silent due to circumstances outside of his or her control, such as memory loss or being overwhelmed with an emotion like fear, awe, or grief. Intentional silences, by contrast, reflect the active, intentional choice of the silent person not to speak; at times, this might be strategic silence utilized to convey a particular message, while at other times, one might choose to remain silent without also intending to communicate a specific message. Muriel Saville-Troike was one of the first to emphasize the distinction between externally or internally imposed silences in “The Place of Silence in An Integrated Theory of Communication,” in *Perspectives on Silence*, ed. Deborah Tannen and Saville-Troike (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1985), 3–18.

16 Vernon Jensen identifies five functions of silence: linkage, affecting, revelational, judgmental, and activating. See Jensen, “Communicative Functions of Silence,” *ETCA Review of General Semantics* 30 (1973): 249–257.

17 Ulrich Schmitz defines “eloquent silence” as “silence which says something.” See “Eloquent Silence,” trans. Allen Mundy, online at <http://www.linse.uni-due.de/linse/publikationen/silence.html>, from “Beredtes Schweigen – Zur sprachlichen Fülle der Leere. Über Grenzen der Sprachwissenschaft,” *Osnabrücker Beiträge zur Prachtheorie*, Heft 42 (1990): 5–58. Leona Torner’s use of “eloquent reticence” is similar: she explores the rhetorical impact of a narrator withholding information in *Eloquent Reticence: Withholding Information in Fictional Narrative* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1993).

appeared onscreen in the 1920s.¹⁸ Silent cinema was defined by its lack of synchronized recorded dialogue; Charlie Chaplin declared that “talkies” were “ruining the great beauty of silence.”¹⁹ And yet, pitting silence against sound obscures the complex relationship between them and ignores the ways that silence impacts viewers. Even after filmmakers introduced sound effects into film production, silence remained a crucial and powerful aspect of movie soundtracks.²⁰ Imagine, for instance, film editor Walter Murch’s use of silence in *The English Patient* (1996): after the main character Caravaggio cries out in protest while his torturers prepare to cut off his thumbs, he is met with...silence. The effect is chilling. In this sense, we might say that silence is itself a sound effect. Silences in literary texts similarly function as foundational features of the narrative soundscape, educing readerly responses that often are essential to the readerly work.

As such, silences can be meaningful discursive events, powerful aspects of – not simply absences of – linguistic exchange.²¹ In this work, I am concerned with a theorizing of silence that, as Lisa Mazzei writes, “locates silence as ‘data,’ not as absence, lack, or omission, but as positive, strategic, purposeful, and *meaning full*.”²² At the same time, I recognize with Leona Toker that “a comprehensive paradigm of the dependence of effects on techniques is impossible and unnecessary.”²³ Instead, I aim to trace *possible* readerly responses and “relate [them] to the rhetorical devices that condition [them].”²⁴ To this end, rather than exhaustively outlining the diverse lines of inquiry to which I allude above, I will note several fundamental observations that many fields share and that will prove helpful in the narrative analysis of Luke’s Gospel to come.

18 Powerful silent films continue to be made and celebrated today. A silent film, *The Artist*, won five Academy Awards in 2012, including best picture.

19 “Charlie Chaplin Attacks the Talkies,” *Motion Picture Magazine* (May 1929); Qtd. in Charles J. Maland, *Chaplin and American Culture: The Evolution of a Star Image* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 1991), 113.

20 As Paul Théberge notes about cinematic texts, “patterns of sound and silence emerge that contribute to the overall structure of the narrative.” “Almost Silent: The Interplay of Sound and Silence in Contemporary Cinema and Television,” in *Lowering the Boom: Critical Studies in Film Sound*, ed. Jay Beck and Tony Grajeda (Champaign: University of Illinois: 2008), 51.

21 As Adam Jaworski puts it, “the absence of speech does not imply the absence of communication.” *The Power of Silence: Social and Pragmatic Perspectives* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1993), 46.

22 Mazzei, *Inhabited Silence*, 29. Emphasis original.

23 Toker, *Eloquent Reticence*, 16.

24 Toker, *Eloquent Reticence*, 16.

Silence is Multivalent

Max Picard's landmark study on silence, *Die Welt des Schweigens* (1948),²⁵ introduced silence's ontological significance into contemporary scholarly discourse, and several decades later, Bernard Dauenhauer's *Silence: The Phenomenon and Its Ontological Significance* further developed Picard's work.²⁶ Treating silence as a fundamentally multivalent phenomenon, these two philosophical considerations of silence sparked a wide variety of scholarly perspectives on the subject.

For example, silence is an especially celebrated theme in both ancient and contemporary²⁷ theologies. In spiritual and theological writings, silence can be the means of entrance into a mystical realm beyond speech,²⁸ or it can point toward the inherent inability of language to describe the ineffable God.²⁹ Scholarship on prayer and expression(s) of the sacred also explore silence as ritual.

25 Max Picard, *Die Welt des Schweigens* (Zurich: Rentsch, 1948). English transl.: *The World of Silence*, trans. Stanley Goodman (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1952).

26 Bernard Dauenhauer, *Silence: The Phenomenon and Its Ontological Significance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980).

27 E.D. Blodgett and H.G. Coward, eds., *Silence, the Word and the Sacred* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1989). For modern Jewish theological treatments of speech and silence, see David J. Wolpe, *In Speech and In Silence: The Jewish Quest for God* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1992); Ernestine Schlant, *The Language of Silence: Meanings of the Holocaust* (London: Routledge, 1999); André Neher, *L'exil de la parole: du silence biblique au silence d'Auschwitz* (Paris: Seuil, 1970); on Chan Buddhism, see Youru Wang, "Liberating Oneself from the Absolutized Boundary of Language: A Liminological Approach to the Interplay of Speech and Silence in Chan Buddhism," *Philosophy East and West* 51.1 (2001): 83–99. From a Christian perspective, see Rachel Muers, *Keeping God's Silence: Towards a Theological Ethics of Communication* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004); Claudia Kunz, *Schweigen und Geist: Biblische und patristische Studien zu einer Spiritualität des Schweigens* (Freiburg: Herder, 1996).

28 See, for example, references to the Valentinian goddess *Sige* (silence) in Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 1.13.6 and descriptions of *Sige* and *Sophia* in *Tripartite Tractate* 56,32–57,7. In the *Gospel of Mary*, as Karen King notes, "It is in silence that one ultimately encounters God." "Hearing, Seeing, and Knowing God: *Allogenes* and the *Gospel of Mary*," in *Early Christian Voices in Texts, Traditions, and Symbols: Essays in Honor of François Bovon*, ed. David H. Warren, Ann Graham Brock, David W. Pao (Boston: Brill, 2003), 325. See also Tilde Bak Halvgaard, "The Sound of Silence: Theology of Language in *The Thunder Perfect Mind* (NHC VI, 2) and *The Trimorphic Protennoia* (NHC XIII, 1)," unpublished paper (University of Copenhagen, 2010). The thirteenth-century poet and mystic Rumi wrote that the soul resides in "silent breath." J. Rumi, *The Essential Rumi*, trans. C. Barks (San Francisco: Harper, 1995), 21.

29 See Joseph Mazzeo on Augustine's *deus absconditus*: "St. Augustine's Rhetoric of Silence," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 23 (1962): 175–96. For a compilation of apophatic discourses, see William Franke, ed., *On What Cannot be Said: Apophatic Discourses in Philosophy, Religion, Literature and the Arts*, Vol. 1: Classic Formulations (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2007).

There is a substantial tradition of silence marking a deep pessimism regarding the efficacy of language.³⁰ For instance, authors addressing the atrocities of the Holocaust remind us that some realities and experiences are inexplicable; trying to put them into words ultimately does an injustice to the inexpressible (as Adorno so famously put it, we can have “no poetry after Auschwitz”).³¹ Often, the same authors simultaneously highlight a different kind of silence: the dysfunctional silencing that stems from denial or shame. They insist that while we must respect the former silence, we must overcome the latter.³²

In the above cases, silence attests to what T.S. Eliot calls the “frontiers of consciousness beyond which words fail, though meanings still exist.”³³ And yet, silence is not *merely* an alternative to failed speech.³⁴ Silence itself can communicate powerfully – it can express shame or fear,³⁵ admiration or domination.³⁶ Silence can signify protective or oppressive censorship, but it can also indicate resistance, or generate anticipation.³⁷

30 Elisabeth Loevlie describes the “Dream of Silence” as a mythical, prelapsarian “other” to language, interpreting “the Fall into sin [as] also the fall into language.” *Literary Silences in Pascal, Rousseau, and Beckett* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 13. Raoul Mortley argues for a massive shift in Greek thought, “from the discovery of logos to the discovery of the inefficacy of logos.” *From Word to Silence: The Rise and Fall of Logos* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1986), 11.

31 See, among many others, Roger Gottlieb, *Thinking the Unthinkable: Meanings of the Holocaust* (New York: Paulist, 1990); André Neher, *L'exil de la parole: du silence biblique au silence d'Auschwitz* (Paris: Seuil, 1970).

32 Elie Wiesel writes, “To forget would be not only dangerous but offensive; to forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time.” *Night* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), xv.

33 T.S. Eliot, *The Music of Poetry: The Third W. P. Ker Memorial Lecture Delivered in the University of Glasgow 24th February 1942* (Glasgow: Jackson, 1942). Or consider how Lord Alfred Tennyson begins *In Memoriam A.H.H.*: “I sometimes hold it half a sin/ To put in words the grief I feel.” *The Works of Tennyson*, 1:242.

34 As Max Picard states, silence is “more than the mere negative renunciation of language.” *The World of Silence*, 15. See, also, the classic work by George Steiner, *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature and the Inhuman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

35 For an ancient example of silence that stems from shame, see *Hero and Leander* II.160–62. Or consider Aeneas, who is dumbstruck with fear in *Aeneid* 4.279–95.

36 Silence “may express dominance or disapproval, or it may indicate submission.” Laura McClure, “Introduction,” in *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 8. See also Deborah Tannen, *Gender and Discourse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

37 King-Kok Cheung proposes five “tonalities” or modes of silence that often overlap: 1) Stoic (silence of heroic endurance); 2) Protective (shielding someone from hearing something negative); 3) Attentive (acute listening); 4) Inhibitive (embarrassed); 5) Oppressive (exiling the other). *Articulate Silences: Hisaye Yamamoto, Maxine Hong Kingston, Joy Kogawa* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993).

Feminist scholars helpfully highlight how patterns of speech and silence can betoken power dynamics in which dominant groups render the marginalized ideologically voiceless through enforced censoring or oppression. In these cases, silence is the result of *silencing*. As Robin Clair points out, such gendered and racialized silences are insidiously and thoroughly embedded within institutional structures.³⁸ bell hooks offers a different but related reminder: in a sense, some communities are silenced even when they speak because those in power refuse to listen. African American women, writes hooks, “have not been silent...our struggle has not been to emerge from silence to speech but...to make speech that compels listeners, one that is heard.”³⁹ The common thread woven throughout these diverse approaches is that silence itself is extraordinarily multivalent.

Silence is Contextually Determined

Deciphering the myriad intentionalities behind silence – interpreting, or “hearing” what remains unsaid – can be daunting. However, recognizing that conceptions and practices of silence acquire specificity within particular contexts can aid in the interpretive task.⁴⁰ Speech-act theorists offer a useful way of conceptualizing this by distinguishing between the *locutionary*, *illocutionary*, and *perlocutionary* acts contained in a single utterance. For instance, the *locution* (the act of saying something) often differs from the *illocution* (the act performed *in* saying that thing), which itself often differs from the *perlocution* (the effects engendered

38 Robin Patric Clair, *Organizing Silence: A World of Possibilities* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998).

39 bell hooks, *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (Boston: South End Press, 1989), 6.

40 The paradigmatic works on speech-act theory are J.L. Austin, *How To Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975); J.R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). The literature relating speech-act theory to biblical interpretation is substantial. Representative works include Richard Briggs, “The Uses of Speech-Act Theory in Biblical Interpretation,” *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 9 (2001): 229–76; Briggs, *Words in Action*; Anthony Threlton, “Christology in Luke, Speech-Act Theory, and the Problem of Dualism in Christology after Kant,” in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ. Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Theology*, ed. Joel Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); W. Houston, “What Did the Prophets Think They Were Doing? Speech Acts and Prophetic Discourse in the Old Testament,” *BI* (1993): 167–88; Hugh White, ed., *Speech-Act Theory and Biblical Criticism*, Se-meia 41 (Decatur: Scholars Press, 1988).

in the hearer *as a result* of the saying). Ronald Thiemann illustrates the importance of context for determining a statement's illocutionary force:

[I]f I say "shut the door" that utterance could function either as a request or a warning. If I have been talking to my daughter in my study and wish to return to my work as she leaves, I might request her to close the door to provide a quieter atmosphere in which to write. If, however, I were to utter those very same words just as a mad dog began to rush into our living room, the words would possess a very different force.⁴¹

Silence itself can be considered a kind of speech act with illocutionary force, transmitting different meanings in different contexts. For instance, certain practices that are considered "silent activities" in one time period often are not conceptualized as silent in other historical contexts; reading and prayer are two obvious examples.⁴² Or consider how the same type of silence can be enabling in some contexts, but disempowering in others. Cheung cites "protective silence" as an example: parents often shield their children from harmful racism, though as the children mature, the same "protective silence" can infantilize them.⁴³ Additionally, one culture can easily misunderstand another culture's conventional silences;⁴⁴ "talkative Americans" consistently misunderstand the stereotypically "silent Swedes."⁴⁵ Temporal, historical, and social contexts shape the meaning of individual instances of silence.

Silence is Rhetorically Powerful

Because silence is both multivalent and contextually-determined, it can be a particularly potent rhetorical tool. Silence is not neutral; as poet Geoffrey Hill

⁴¹ Ronald Thiemann, *Revelation and Theology: The Gospel as Narrated Promise* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), 99.

⁴² Pieter W. van der Horst, "Silent Prayer in Antiquity," *Numen* 41 (1994): 1–25; Paul Saenger, *Space Between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1997). In ancient Greek practice, prayers were spoken in a low voice or kept completely silent only when danger was perceived in speaking them out loud; see Montiglio, *Silence in the Land of Logos* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 9–45.

⁴³ Cheung, *Articulate Silences*, 139.

⁴⁴ Charles Braithwaite, "Cultural Uses and Interpretations of Silence," in *The Nonverbal Communication Reader*, ed. Laura Guerrero, Joseph DeVito, and Michael Hecht (Prospect Heights: Waveland, 1999), 163–72.

⁴⁵ Consider the famous Swedish proverb, "Tala är silver, tiga är guld" (To speak is silver; to remain silent is gold). Christina Johansson Robinowitz and Lisa Werner Carr, *Modern-Day Vikings: A Practical Guide to Interacting with the Swedes* (Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, 2001).

writes, “Questions of silence are essentially questions of value.”⁴⁶ And yet, for too long, we have equated silence with passivity, weakness, and submission.⁴⁷ Recently, scholars have begun to explore silence as a purposeful rhetorical stance – an active expression of power in and of itself. Indeed, Cheryl Glenn calls for “serious investigation” into silence as an “as yet underexamined rhetorical art.”⁴⁸ In particular, Glenn reminds us that interpersonal communication always entails power negotiations:

Like speech, the meaning of silence depends on a power differential that exists in every rhetorical situation: who can speak, who must remain silent, who listens, and what those listeners can do.⁴⁹

Linguist Thomas Huckin similarly explores the rhetoricity of “textual silences,” which he defines as, “the omission of some piece of information that is pertinent to the topic at hand.”⁵⁰ Huckin helpfully classifies some textual silences as “covert,” meaning that the reader does not know she is missing information, and others as “collaborative,” meaning that the writer assumes the reader will rightly fill the gap in order to understand the text.⁵¹ As Huckin rightly points out, both types of textual silences can be either “rhetorically benign,” or “rhetorically manipulative.”⁵² To the extent that they guide readers’ interpretive decisions, textual silences are on par with more commonly recognized rhetorical tools.

The foregoing discussion has outlined how current theoretical treatments of silence help us understand silence as a multivalent, contextually-determined rhetorical strategy. With this in mind, I take up Glenn’s challenge to investigate silence as a serious rhetorical art. In this study, I do so with a specific ancient text in view: Luke’s Gospel. To investigate silence in Luke fully, we must reflect

⁴⁶ Geoffrey Hill, “Language, Suffering, and Silence (1998),” in *Collected Critical Writings*, ed. Kenneth Haynes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 394.

⁴⁷ For example, when considering ancient democracy, Zumbrunnen warns against the common tendency to take “the silence of ordinary citizens as a sign of their disempowerment or irrelevance.” John Zumbrunnen, *Silence and Democracy: Athenian Politics in Thucydides’ History* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 10.

⁴⁸ Cheryl Glenn, *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004), 2, 4.

⁴⁹ Glenn, *Unspoken*, 9. See also A.N. Perret-Clermont, M.L. Schubauer-Leoni, and A. Trognon, “L’Extorsion des Reponses en Situation Asymetrique,” in *Verbum: Conversations Adulte/Enfants* (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1992), 3–32.

⁵⁰ Thomas Huckin, “On Textual Silences, Large and Small,” in *Traditions of Writing Research*, ed. Charles Bazerman et al. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 420.

⁵¹ Huckin, “On Textual Silences,” 420.

⁵² Huckin, “On Textual Silences,” 420.

further on two key topics: silence in antiquity, and silence in narratives. These two topics raise a host of related questions: How was silence conceptualized in antiquity? Who was silent before whom, and why? How do various silences function in narratives specifically, and to what ends? How are “covert” and “collaborative” silences rhetorically articulated in narratives, and what difference do these make in how readers might understand stories? We turn now to previous studies of silence in antiquity.

Previous Scholarship on Silence in Antiquity

Several recent scholarly projects on silence in antiquity form the backdrop for my approach to Luke’s Gospel. In *Silence in the Land of Logos*, for example, Silvia Montiglio explores the exceedingly complex ways that “silence resonates” in what she deems the pervasively vocal culture of archaic and classical Greece.⁵³ Montiglio highlights how diverse sources from Homeric narratives to Athenian oratories depict silence as a shield, thereby paradoxically pointing toward the mysterious power of the spoken word. Although Montiglio mentions several differences between the ancient Greek context and that of the first century C.E., she does not explore the latter period in depth.⁵⁴

Explicit references to silence are scattered throughout various early Christian texts. For instance, in the *Acts of Peter* (2nd cent. C.E.), Peter teaches that the divine voice is “heard through silence.”⁵⁵ Early Christian apologist Ignatius of Antioch taught about three “mysteries” that God accomplished in silence.⁵⁶ Currently, scholars are exploring similar themes in Nag Hammadi texts, where God dwells in silence and the Word proceeds from silence,⁵⁷ powers are created and mysteries are hidden in silence,⁵⁸ Sophia is dubbed “Silence” (Σιγή),⁵⁹

⁵³ Montiglio, *Silence in the Land of Logos*.

⁵⁴ For instance, she points out that ancient Greek references to their audiences as appropriately vocal differ from the positive, attentive listening she finds in Roman literature. *Silence in the Land of Logos*, 151–52.

⁵⁵ *Acts of Peter* 39.

⁵⁶ Ign. *Ad Eph.* 19.1.

⁵⁷ *Allogenes* 61.1–22; 62.24–25; 63.34–35; *Val. Exp.* 22.21–27.

⁵⁸ *Ap. John* 2.1–2; 6.35–7.4. See Karen King, “Mystery and Secrecy in *The Apocryphon of John*,” in *Mystery and Secrecy in the Nag Hammadi Collection and Other Ancient Literature: Ideas and Practices*, ed. John Turner, Ismo Dunderberg, Christian H. Bull and Liv Ingeborg Lied, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 61–85.

⁵⁹ *Eugnostos* 88.5–12.

and silence and mystery coexist in Jesus.⁶⁰ Thus, Kim Haines-Eitzen's call for scholars to attend to "the role of sound in the early Christian imagination" is quite appropriate.⁶¹ As Haines-Eitzen points out, early Christian texts often exhibit a complex relationship "between sound, silence, and the sacred," and therefore require more nuanced approaches that "move beyond a simple dichotomy of opposites or binaries like presence and absence, active and passive, power and impotence."⁶²

One of the assumptions underlying my exploration of Luke's Gospel is that simplistic dichotomies like presence/absence, active/passive, and power/impotence are inadequate for reading the silences of the Lukan narrative. As Ernestine Schlant asserts in *The Language of Silence*, literal absence can constitute a powerful form of presence.⁶³ Indeed, present/absent figures also have their analogues in written texts.⁶⁴ In 1 Corinthians 5.3, for example, Paul refers to the subjective sense in which one can be "absent in body, but present in spirit" (ἀπὸν τῷ σώματι παρὼν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι).⁶⁵

Feminist biblical scholars also attend to silence in ancient texts, but in a different key: they draw special attention to the silencing of women by ancient texts

60 1 Apoc. Jas. 28.1–3. See J. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition* (Québec: Le Presses de l'Université Laval, 2001).

61 Kim Haines-Eitzen, "Imagining Sound and Silence," paper presented at the AAR/SBL national meeting, San Francisco, Calif., 2011, 14. Related to the topic of sound in early Christian literature is the growing body of scholarship devoted to performance criticism. See, for example, Bernard Brandon Scott, who writes argues that "the amphitheater forms the primary metaphor for communication in the ancient world and sound is the medium of communication." See Bernard Brandon Scott, "A New Voice in the Amphitheater: Full Fidelity in Translating," in *Fidelity in Translation: Communicating the Bible in the New Media*, ed. Robert Hodgson and Paul Soukup (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1999), 110. See also www.biblicalperformancecriticism.org.

62 Kim Haines-Eitzen, "Imagining Sound and Silence," 14.

63 Literary critics considering the Holocaust especially have made strides toward overcoming the strict presence/absence binary. Ernestine Schlant, *The Language of Silence*, 1.

64 On this, see especially Thomas Docherty, *Reading (Absent) Character: Towards a Theory of Characterization in Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983). William James considers "presence in absence" to be a form of "pointing" to something about which one knows, but with which one is not directly acquainted (in short, something that is physically absent, but present in one's mind). See his lecture from December 1894, printed as "The Knowing of Things Together," in *Essays in Philosophy*, ed. Frederick Burkhardt and Fredson Bowers (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 73.

65 Of course, the reverse is also possible. One can be physically present, but mentally or emotionally absent, not functioning fully due to illness or some other distraction. In business, this has been called "presenteeism." See Paul Hemp, "Presenteeism: At Work – But Out of It," *Harvard Business Review* (2004): 1–9.

themselves,⁶⁶ as well as by the scholarship that interprets them. Commensurate with recognizing such silences, then, scholars face the greater challenge of recovering women's voices from history.⁶⁷ Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre summarizes the questions that are by now so familiar in feminist biblical scholarship: "How do we read the silences and biases of the text? Were there no wo/men present because no wo/men are mentioned?"⁶⁸ Such work often focuses on speech as an index of power,⁶⁹ and correlatively, silence as a mark of – and prescription for – subordination. For example, Turid Karlsen Seim, discussing Mary's silence in Lk. 10.38–42, asks, "Does the idealisation of Mary mean that a woman's relationship to the word is to be understood in terms of silence?"⁷⁰ Feminist biblical scholars offer crucial insights into speech and silence in biblical texts.⁷¹ Still, I

66 Aristotle asserted, "Silence gives grace to a woman – though that is not the case likewise with a man." *Politica* 1.5.9. Or consider Homer's *Odyssey*, where Telemachus tells his mother, "speech (μῦθος) will be for men, for all, but most of all for me; for mine is the authority in the house" (*Od.* 1.359). The biblical admonition continues to be influential in many Christian circles today: "Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent" (1 Tim. 2.11–12). Regarding the Lukan text, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza maintains that Luke consistently excludes women from leadership; she designates this "the Lukan silence." "Biblische Grundlegung," in *Feministische Theologie: Perspektiven zur Orientierung*, ed. M. Kassel (Stuttgart: Kreuz, 1988), 32, 35–38. Similarly, Jane Schaberg writes in the *Women's Bible Commentary* that Luke is "an extremely dangerous text, perhaps the most dangerous in the Bible" because contrary to many people's impressions, Luke "fosters women's silence in the Gospel as a whole, although the women at the tomb do speak out," Expanded Edition (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 363, 368.

67 For a variety of perspectives, see André Lardinois and Laura McClure, eds., *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

68 Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre, "'Gazing Upon the Invisible': Archaeology, Historiography, and the Elusive Women of 1 Thessalonians," in *From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonike: Studies in Religion and Archaeology*, ed. Laura Nasrallah, Charalambos Bakirtzis, and Steven J. Friesen, Harvard Theological Studies (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010). Silence as invisibility is a common topos in a wide range of biblical studies and theological texts. See, for example, the helpful discussion in Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Breaking the Silence—Becoming Visible," in "Women: Invisible in Church and Theology," in *Concilium: Religion in the Eighties*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Mary Collins (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1985).

69 When characters do speak, terms of address and deferential forms can index different social relationships between speakers. See, among others, Lk. 5.8, 12; 7.6, 9.59, 61; 10.17; 12.41; 18.41.

70 Seim, *The Double Message: Patterns of Gender in Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 116.

71 For a discussion of the Lukan tendency to honor Peter's authority over Mary Magdalene's, see Ann Graham Brock, *Mary Magdalene, The First Apostle: The Struggle for Authority*, Harvard Theological Studies 51 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 19–40. On women's prophetic speech in early Christian literature, see Karen King, "Prophetic Power and Women's Authority: The Case of the Gospel of Mary (Magdalene)," in *Women Preachers and Prophets*

want to emphasize that equating silence with powerlessness can obfuscate the fact that in some contexts, silence denotes power.⁷²

Scholars of rhetoric like Cheryl Glenn and Krista Ratcliffe remind us that an interest in silence as a powerful rhetorical tool is quite ancient: “Westerners have long forgotten (if we ever knew in the first place) the ancient Egyptian and Pythagorean beliefs in the value of silence and listening.”⁷³ They cite examples such as the Egyptian vizier Kagemeni, who viewed silence as a means of establishing a good reputation, and Pythagoras, who famously enjoined novices to maintain a five-year vow of silence.⁷⁴ Kathy Maxwell draws evidence from the ancient rhetorical handbooks like those of Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and the progymnasmata, to describe how “authors use silence to speak to their audience.”⁷⁵ Over sixty years ago, Ernest Dutoit argued that the Roman historian Livy utilized *silentium* rhetorically to heighten emotion and create a foil to action.⁷⁶ Projects like these demonstrate that silence was a pervasive and serious concern among ancient authors; in that demonstration, they raise the possibility that interpretations of ancient texts are inadequate to the extent that they ignore these issues.

I will also argue that one of the Lukan narrator’s key rhetorical aims is to advance a particular kind of Christian identity. Here, previous work connecting ancient speech ethics with identity formation will be useful. Drawing from a wide range of ancient texts, Jeremy Hultin demonstrates that despite the great diversity in particulars, there was widespread agreement in the ancient world

Through Two Millennia of Christianity, ed. Beverly Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

⁷² Laird cites Ovid’s love elegy *Amores* as an example of a speaker who is in a subordinate role to the silent addressee. *Powers of Expression*, 19.

⁷³ Cheryl Glenn and Krista Ratcliffe, “Why Silence and Listening Are Important Rhetorical Arts,” in *Silence and Listening as Rhetorical Arts* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 2011), 1.

⁷⁴ The Pythagoreans’ vow of silence was seen to indicate their *enkrateia* – self-mastery. See Iamblichus, *De vita pythagorica* 74. See also the joke about this in Lucian, *Demon*. 14.

⁷⁵ Kathy Maxwell, *Hearing Between the Lines: The Audience as Fellow-Worker in Luke-Acts and its Literary Milieu* (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 1. Maxwell identifies six tools commonly used by ancient rhetoricians to encourage audience participation: 1) Access to privileged information; 2) Specific Omissions; 3) Open-ended comparisons; 4) Hidden meanings; 5) Question and Answer; 6) Allusion (49–78). Though she focuses on the Lukan narrative, Maxwell does not consider the silences of the characters in the story.

⁷⁶ E. Dutoit, “Silences, dans l’oeuvre de Tite-Live,” in *Mélanges de philologie, de littérature et d’histoire anciennes offerts à J. Marouzeau* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres 1948), 141–51.